



# Environmental News

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## **PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOSTERS ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS**

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Administrator Christie Whitman today announced President Bush's proposed Fiscal Year 2003 budget request of \$7.7 billion to support EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment. The budget request includes more than a 100 percent increase in funding for Brownfields, significant increases for watershed protection and a \$200 million overall increase over last year's request.

"The budget we are submitting today reflects President Bush's strong commitment to leaving America's air cleaner, its water purer, and its land better protected than it was when we took office," Whitman said. "It promotes that goal by further strengthening our partnerships with state, local and tribal governments. It promotes that goal by funding innovative new programs and strengthening existing programs that work. And it promotes that goal in a manner consistent with our commitment to fiscal responsibility."

Whitman also indicated that state and tribal programs are the recipients of nearly half of EPA's budget request. "Our proposed request provides almost \$3.5 billion in grants for states, tribes and other partners. The President and I both believe that not all wisdom resides in Washington, D.C., and that lots of innovative, creative, and effective environmental progress is being made by state, county and local governments," said Whitman.

Included in EPA's grant figure is a \$15 million state enforcement grant program. These additional grant resources will help states and tribes take on greater responsibility of the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations and will allow them to prioritize their enforcement needs.

The budget request for fiscal year 2003, which begins Oct. 1, provides \$200 million for the nationally-acclaimed Brownfields program. This program to reclaim abandoned industrial sites and convert them to new uses within communities is a top environmental priority of the Bush Administration and is a cornerstone of EPA's partnership efforts with states, tribes and localities. The true success of the Brownfields program is what communities are doing for themselves -- selecting the path best suited to meet local needs and turning dormant and blighted neighborhoods into thriving, renewed community resources.

Whitman announced that the Administration's request includes several innovative programs that will build and strengthen partnerships and ultimately build healthier communities.

The budget includes \$21 million for a new program where EPA will work with its environmental partners to target 20 specific watershed projects for improvement. This public-private partnership effort will replicate successful approaches of watershed restoration projects, such as the Charles River Initiative in New England. It will drastically improve the water quality for boating, swimming and fishing in communities across the nation.

To help recognize and reward innovative technologies that produce more effective and lower cost solutions to environmental problems and to stimulate development where major technology gaps exist, the request provides \$10 million for the new National Environmental Technology Competition. This competition builds public-private partnerships, fosters technological innovation through competition and promotes the development of new, cost-effective technologies that address some of our most pressing environmental challenges.

To continue to do its part to ensure the nation is prepared to respond to terrorist incidents, EPA is investing an additional \$124 million for homeland security. Combined with resources provided in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2002, this represents a two-year total of \$300 million in new resources. EPA plays a critical role in preparing for and responding to terrorist incidents because of its unique expertise and experience in emergency preparedness and response to hazardous material releases.

Included in this figure is \$20 million to address threats to the nation's drinking water supply. EPA plays a significant role in working with state governments and local utilities to protect drinking water supplies. EPA already has begun working with states and local utilities to assess this vulnerability. The additional \$20 million being requested in FY 2003 will augment \$88 million appropriated as part of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2002, which together will ensure that utilities have developed a comprehensive assessment of these vulnerabilities and emergency operations plans using the most current methods and technologies.

Also included in the \$124 million request for homeland security is \$75 million so that the Agency can research better techniques for cleaning up buildings contaminated by biological agents.

"Taken together, the President's proposed budget for FY 2003 fully supports the work of this Agency," Whitman said. "It will enable us to transform this Agency's 30-year mission to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It brings us that much closer to realizing our goal of cleaner air for all Americans to breathe, purer water for all Americans to drink and swim and fish in, and better protected land for all Americans to enjoy and cherish for generations to come."